fishermen had entered Sri Lankan waters.

(b) Government have invariably taken up such incidents with the Government of Sri Lanka with a view to preventing such occurrences.

(c) The Coast Guard and Indian Naval authorities have been given clear directions to ensure the safety of our fishermen and to prevent their going across the maritime boundary into Sri Lankan waters. Our Coast Guard ships are under directions to maintain utmost vigilance and to intensify night patrols. A Coast Guard station at Mandapam provides logistic support to Coast Guard ships operating in the area and maintains a close liaison with the Tamil Nadu State Government authorities in Rameshwaram.

Review of the progress of the Rural Development Programmes

1328. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Rao Committee set up by the Planning Commission to review the progress of the rural development programmes has submitted its report;

(b) if so, what are its recommendations; and

(c) whether Government propose to reshape the different rural development programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement containing the summary of the Committee's recommendations is attached. (*See* below)

(c) The report has been circulated for ascertaining the reaction of the State Governments.

Statement

1. The Committee feels that the time has come to take a total view of Rural Development. It has to encompass all economic and social development activities handled by different agencies at the field level. It is not advisable any longer to limit anti-poverty programme to a few specific schemes.

2. Past experience clearly indicates that government machinery (Bureaucracy) alone cannot be assigned the responsibility for achieving economic development and social justice.

3. While the objectives of removal of poverty, as laid down in the Seventh Plan, must be adhered to, local initiative must be encouraged and the detailed strategy worked out by local people. It is, therefore, essential to involve the people and their representatives effectively in drawing up programmes of rural development and their implementation.

4. Panchayati Raj institutions have to be activised and given all the support needed so that they can become effective organisations for handling people's problems. Elections to these bodies should be held regularly.

5. It is also necessary to encourage voluntary agencies, with informed idealism, operating in rural areas, in every possible way.

6. The district should be the basic unit for policy planning and programme implementation. The Zila Parishad should, therefore, become the principal body for management of all the development programmes which can be handled at the level.

7. The President of the Zila Parishad can be directly elected for a term co-terminus with the Zila Parishad, or for one year each on the Mayoral pattern. The work of the Zila Parishad should be done by a number of Sub-Committees, elected on the basis of the proportional re-

presentation so that participatory democracy could be developed and encouraged.

8. Panchayati Raj institutions at the district level and below should be assigned important role in respect of planning, implementation and monitoring of rural development programmes.

9. Some of the planning functions at the state level may have to be transferred to the district level for effective decentralised district planning.

10. In this connection, the Committee recommends the introduction of the concept of district budget. It is desirable that it is brought into being as quickly as possible.

11. The concept of a properly prepared district plan is reiterated. The preparation of a proper plan is a prerequisite for having a process of development which will ensure that the poor are properly taken care of. All the development departments should clearly indicate the activities which they would undertake for assisting the poor.

12. The district plan should include all the resources available both in the plan and non-plan as well as institutional resources.

13. It is necessary for the banking institutions including the cooperatives to ensure that the credit requirements of the rural poor are adequately met, such facilities should also cover the legitimate consumption credit requirements of the poor.

14. The process of economic development itself should be designed so as to reduce poverty. The implementation of land reforms has to be done with greater vigour so as to ultimately ensure that the land goes to the tiller.

15. Since rural development encompasses the activities of a number of departments at the State level, there is an urgent need for effective coordination and proper direction at this level.

16. The Committee recommends that a very Senior Officer of the rank of Chief Secretary designated as Development Commissioner be incharge of development administration at the State level.

17. The Major Rural Development Departments like Rural Development, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Co-operation, Industries etc. should be directly under his purview. The Secretaries of these Deptts. will work directly under him.

18. The Committee is of the view that development administration at the district level has to be treated as a major activity involving significant responsibilities.

19. The Committee, therefore, recommends that a post of District Development Commissioner (DDC) be created to look after and coordinate all the developmental activities in the district.

20. The DDC may be made the Chief Executive of the Zila Parishad in those States where the Panchayati Raj institutions hold the responsibility for planning and implementation of various development programmes.

21. In those States where Zila Parishads are not in a position, the DDC could function as Chairman and Chief Executive of the District Development Council.

22. The office of the DDC should be of a higher status than that of the District Collector in order to establish he primacy of the development administration over maintenance administration.

23. The existing districts set up with weak planning machinery, multiplicity of agencies and lack of effective coordination needs revamping.

24. Along with the establishment of the office of the DDC, significant

restructuring of planning and implementation machinery at the district level should also be effected.

25. The proliferation of development agencies and departmentalisation and fragmentation of functions should cease.

26. The most important constituent of the district development office will be the District Planning Team, the Distt. Rural Development Team and the Distt. Finance and Accounts Officer who will be incharge of the district budget also.

27. The District Level Officers of the various functional/line departments will continue to handle the work relating to their respective areas. However, the schemes and programmes being implemented by them should form an integral part of the District Development Plan.

28. The major operational machinery for implementation of district rural development plan will be the block level set up. For this purpose revamping of the block machinery is essential.

29. The Committee recommends that the Block Development Office should be the sheet-anchor of the entire rural development process. For this purpose the status of this office should be upgraded. Chief Executive Office of the Block/Tehsil may be designated as Assistant Development Commissioner (ADC). The ADC should be an officer of the status of Sub-Divisional Officer.

30. The ADC should be a dynamic young person, preferably below the age of 35 and in any case not above 40. His background, training, managerial capability and motivation should be appropriate for the task as the leader of a team which will be incharge of all development functions in the block.

31. There is an urgent need for rationalisation/reorganisation of blocks to ensure that they become viable units for the task assigned to them.

32. On the basis of certain criteria of population, area and terrain, average size of the block may be one lakh population in the plains and 50,000 population in the hilly and difficult terrain and tribal areas.

33. On the above basis there could be about 6,000 CD blocks.

34. There is also an urgent need for rationalising the deployment of functionaries at the district level and below.

35. Considering the task to be assigned to the various levels of administrative set up at the district level and below, the State Governments may have to work out the staff requirements.

36. In some cases there may not be significant augmentation of the streenght; the requirements will be met by redeployment of the staff after necessary reorientation/training.

37. Wherever additional staff requirements are involved, the State Governments may send the proposals to the centre.

38. A Committee of Secretaries of the Departments of Planning, Expenditure, Agriculture and Rural Development will examine and approve the additional requirements on the basis of certain norms.

39. Two-thirds of the cost of additional staff should be borne by the Centre during the Seventh Five Year Plan.

40. A refresher/orientation training may be organised for the different functionaries engaged in Rural Development Programme. For this purpose, additional training facilities be created wherever necessary and the full cost thereof may be borne by the Centre.